



**WSCC School Health NJ Project  
Parent Engagement Webinar  
December 6, 2018**

**Parents as Partners for  
Healthy Schools**

**KEY SLIDES**

Funded by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Health,  
Division of Family Health Services, Child and Adolescent Health Program.

# School Health Dilemmas

- You are concerned about traffic safety at your school, but the town is not responsive.
- Your students go out for recess but they have no balls or other equipment to encourage them to run around.

**What is one possibly  
underutilized resource that  
might help?**

**Parents!**

# Why Parents as Partners in School Health?

*To effect improvements in school wellness, we must involve parents as partners in the process.*



**David Satcher, MD, PhD.**

**Former U.S. Surgeon General**



# Topics for Today

**Introduction: What is Health ?**

- I. Parent Engagement – Research and Evidence**
- II. Parents as Partners in the CDC School Health Model**
- III. Strategies for Engaging Parents as Partners**
- IV. Parents as Champions for Healthy Schools Workshop**

# What is Health?



# Four Types of Health

- **PHYSICAL**
- **MENTAL**
- **EMOTIONAL**
- **SOCIAL**

# Physical Health



- *The way our bodies function and react to disease*

# Mental Health

- *Ability to concentrate, listen, think, use common sense and cope with the demands of daily life*



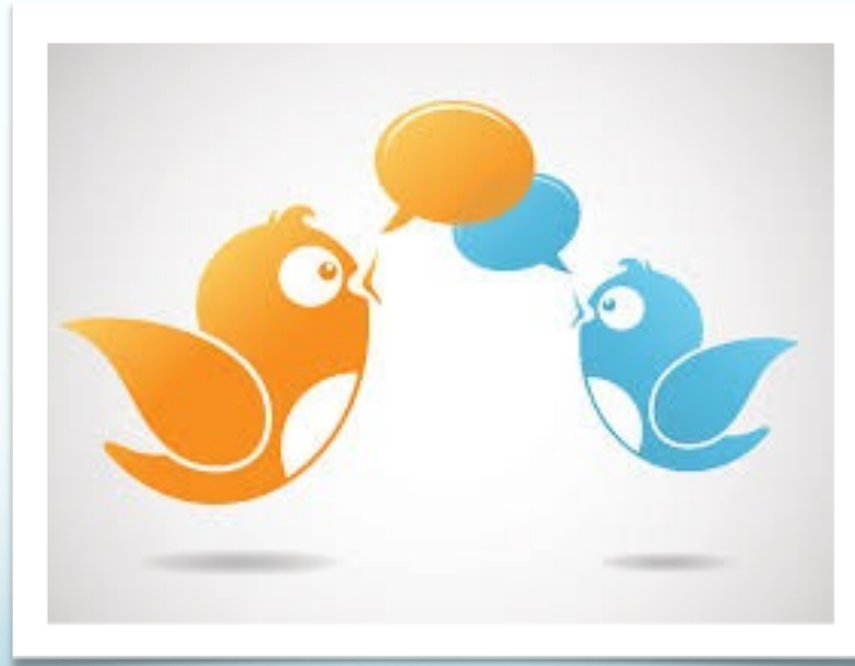
# Emotional Health

- *Expressing thoughts and emotions in a positive way*
- *Ability to cope with everyday problems and stress, manage emotions, self-confidence*



# Social Health

- *Quality of relationship with family, friends, teachers and others*



# Which Type of Health is Most Important to Me?

- PHYSICAL
- MENTAL
- EMOTIONAL
- SOCIAL



# Parent Engagement

## Joyce Epstein's School - Parent - Community Partnership Model

1. Parenting
2. Communicating
3. Volunteering
4. Learning at Home
5. Decision-Making
6. Collaborating with the Community

# Joyce Epstein's School - Parent - Community Partnership Model

## **1. Parenting**

Assist families with parenting skills and setting home conditions to support children as students and assist schools to better understand families.

# Joyce Epstein's School - Parent - Community Partnership Model

## **2. Communicating**

Communicate with families about school programs and student progress. Create two-way communication channels between school and home.

# Joyce Epstein's School - Parent - Community Partnership Model

## **3. Volunteering**

Organize volunteers and audiences to support the school and students. Provide volunteer opportunities in various locations and at various times.

# Joyce Epstein's School - Parent - Community Partnership Model

## **4. Learning at Home**

Involve families with their children in academic learning at home, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities.

# Joyce Epstein's School - Parent – Community Partnership Model

## **5. Decision-Making**

Include families as participants in school decisions, and develop parent leaders and representatives.

# Joyce Epstein's School - Parent – Community Partnership Model

## **6. Collaborating with the Community**

Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups, and provide services to the community.

# Parent Engagement and Academics: What the Research Shows

**Parents involved in their children's and teen's school lives positively impact their health behaviors AND their academic achievement.**

Students who have engaged parents are:

- more likely to have increased attendance, higher grades and test scores, better social skills, improved classroom behavior, and graduated high school
- less likely to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, become pregnant, be physically inactive, and be emotionally distressed

Michael, S. L., Merlo, C. L., Basch, C. E., Wentzel, K. R. and Wechsler, H. (2015), Critical Connections: Health and Academics. J School Health, 85: 740–758. doi:10.1111/josh.12309



# CDC's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model



- Health Education
- Physical Education
- Nutrition Environment & Services
- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Social Emotional Climate
- Physical Environment
- Employee Wellness
- **Family Engagement**
- Community Involvement

# CDC Definition: Family Engagement

*“Families and school staff work together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of students.”*



# Some Parent Engagement Strategies That Work

- Welcoming School Environment
- Varying Meeting Times
- Health-Related School Events
- Cultural Competence
- Use Everyday Language
- Humor!

# Communicating with Parents

- Tailor communication to parent audience - PTA, greater community
- Tailor and combine outreach – text, email, hard copy, school e-newsletter, fliers, banners
- Asking parents what interests them – surveys

# To Increase H&W Team Participation

- Several parent members on H&W team
- Convenient meeting times -before, during, after school
- Use of Skype
- Maintain minutes and send them out
- Parents reach out to other parents about SHIP
- Participation in Parents as Champions for Healthy Schools Workshop

# Preparing Parents as Partners: “Parents as Champions for Healthy Schools” Workshop

- Three sessions
- Five hours each session
- Teams of three parents or more
- Teams create a school health action plan
- Grant opportunity for eligible teams to implement their action plan





# What Parents Learn



The **Knowledge, Skills and Confidence** they need to be effective partners to promote school health

# Parents Gain Knowledge

- What is Health?
- What is School Health?
- Whole School, Community, Child Model
- Role of Parents as Partners to Effect Change





# Parents Learn Skills

- How Schools Work
- Effective Communication
- Determine Area of Need
- Create an Action Plan



# Skills

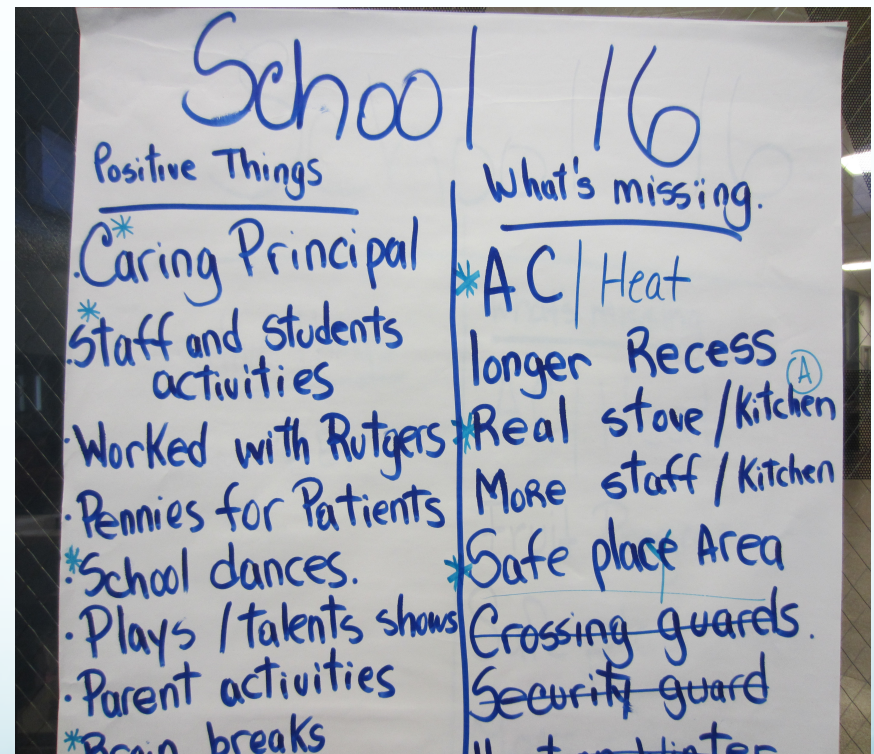
## Active Listening



# Skills

What Works/What's Missing

## Critical Thinking



# **Success Stories: Parent Team Grant Applications**

- Yoga classes for students, staff and families
- Fitness equipment for children with special needs
- Portable sports system for recess
- Introduction to fruit and vegetables
- Health and Nutrition Fair



# Evaluation Shows Our Program is Effective



Evaluation found a statistically significant increase in program participants' knowledge, skills, and confidence around parent engagement and school health.

# Most Valuable Lesson Learned: What Parents Said

*This was my very first workshop in my life and it was fantastic. I learned how important health is. I am overweight and it helped me learn how to help myself and how to help my kids.*

# Most Valuable Lesson Learned: What Parents Said

*I learned a lot of things about the school district that I did not know. It was also a chance to see other parents from other schools in the district who are also advocates; we collaborated together to make change that we wouldn't have been able to do individually.*

# Most Valuable Lesson Learned: What School Representatives Said

- The "power of parents;" and how many parents do not realize how powerful they are in making change happen at the school.
- The importance of parent participation; in the words of one principal, "any school that has good parent participation is a successful school."



# For more information about the Parents as Champions Program

**please visit the SPAN website at:**

<https://spanadvocacy.org/programs/champions/>

